

2.1 PHYSICAL SETTING AND LAND USE

2.1.1 Affected Environment

2.1.1.1 Physical Setting

The site of the security action is bounded to the north by H Street, to the south by E Street, to the west by 17th Street, and to the east by 15th Street. The core study area is confined to the general area in which the security action took place.

The extended study area comprises governmental, institutional, and commercial office buildings as well as public parkland, wide avenues, and open spaces associated with the Monumental Core. Washington, D.C. was founded as the home of the federal government. The design of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan for the city and the several refinement efforts that have followed have culminated in a city of impressive public buildings and plazas united by wide avenues and open spaces. Washington, D.C. is also the home for a large residential population, and the central city for a large and expanding metropolitan area.

2.1.1.2 Land Use

Land use in the area surrounding the site of the security action exemplifies the design of the L'Enfant Plan for the Federal City, a unique design for an American city. The extended study area incorporates a portion of the Monumental Core and the open spaces, public buildings, and plazas associated with the L'Enfant Plan. The extended study area also incorporates portions of a downtown urban business district that developed independent of the L'Enfant Plan. A map of general land use is provided in Figure 2-2.

The area surrounding the site of the security action to the north, northeast, east, and northwest of the White House comprises mostly commercial office buildings and retail establishments that constitute the downtown business district. Parks are interspersed in this area, as designed in the L'Enfant Plan. These parks include McPherson Square, Farragut Square, Franklin Square, Thomas Circle, and Washington Circle as well as small triangular parks created by the angled intersections of Pennsylvania Avenue with streets on the grid pattern.

Federal buildings surround the site of the security action and extend to the east and southeast in the Federal Triangle complex and to the west and southwest in the Foggy Bottom area. Federal buildings in the extended study area include the

White House Complex, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of the Interior, the Federal Reserve Board, the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Office of Personnel Management, the General Services Administration, and the Interstate Commerce Commission. Buildings in the area also house nongovernmental organizations and institutions such as the Organization of American States, the National Academy of Sciences, the International Red Cross Headquarters, the United Nations, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.

Small areas of residential land use exist in the far northeastern and northwestern portions of the extended study area. These are the southern fringes of residential areas that extend north of the extended study area. Some residential buildings also exist in Foggy Bottom, west of the site of the security action. These buildings are mostly student housing for the George Washington University, which is also in this area. The southern portion of the extended study area borders open space associated with the National Mall, the Monumental Core, and the Smithsonian Institution.

The Washington, D.C. regional planning agency is the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). In *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital: Federal Elements*, and *Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century*, the NCPC presents concepts that would maintain, extend, and enhance the planning and design concepts that have shaped the development of the city for its 200 years. The NCPC plan was used as a source document for land use planning information.

2.1.2 Impacts Analysis

The removal of vehicular traffic from those streets in the location of the security action enhances the physical setting by reducing noise levels and emissions and providing better pedestrian access. This enhancement constitutes a beneficial impact only on those streets where vehicular traffic was restricted.

Because the extended study area is within a mature, developed urban environment that substantially limits land-use development or major changes, land uses are not expected to change substantially by any single influence. The security action, which resulted primarily in changes to the transportation system, has not changed the character of the surrounding land areas, nor will it affect the designated uses

of the land as shown in Figure 2-2. The vehicular restrictions do not constitute a change in land use. These streets will continue to allow pedestrian and bicycle access.

The impacts of changes in noise levels and air quality in the extended study area and their corresponding effects on land use, including protected historic sites, are addressed in Section 2.3, Air Quality; Section 2.4, Noise; and Section 2.6, Cultural Resources, respectively.

Figure 2-2: General Land Use

